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CONTENTS

LAVENDER

FEATURE: RESTAURANT ISSUE

28 Dining Out for Life
36 New Restaurant Guide

OUR LAVENDER

10 From the Editor
12 A Word in Edgewise
14 Lavender Lens

OUR SCENE

18 Arts: Spotlight
22 Travel: Louisville
26 A Day in the Life: Paul Bigot

OUR LIVES

46 Leather Life

OUR AFFAIRS

48 Books
50 Faith

OUR HOMES

52 Ride Review

OUR RESOURCES

54 The Network
55 Classifieds
56 Community Connection

OUR VOICES

57 Dateland
58 Skirting the Issues









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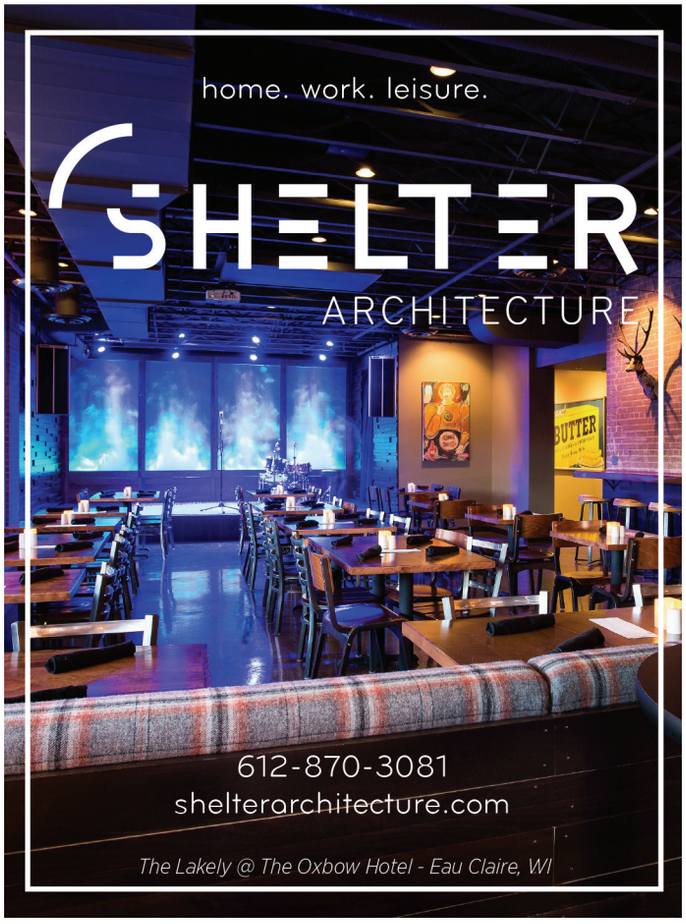
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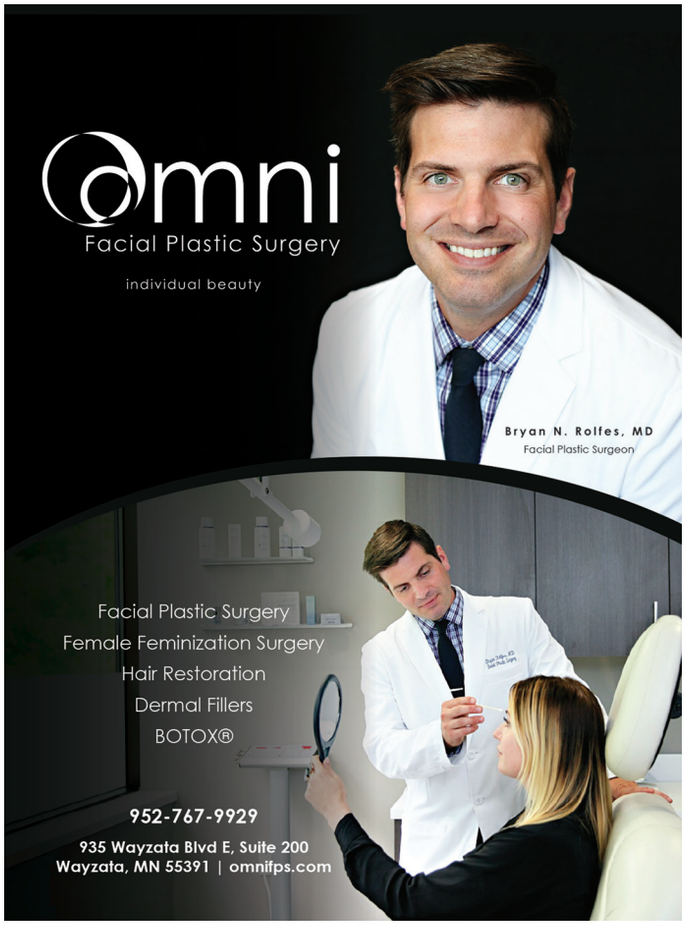


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Kare11's Sven Sundgaard and Rena Sarigianopoulos want you to join them for Dining Out for Life.
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Building Longer Tables

When I look back at 2017, I know that it will be far from a golden year. There will be no rose-colored glasses or waxing poetic over these first few months. But, what I hope I will see is how life found ways to be vibrant and hopeful in different ways. Something that is particularly apropos for a restaurant issue is how food can bring us together for safety, security, meaningful conversations, and just sitting in silence...chewing. We are very familiar with going to eat at fundraising dinners where the food is similar, the tables are sold, and the speakers are supposed to rile us up to make change and give money. But how about inviting people over for a potluck, having quiet conversation while passing dishes, and putting out jars for free-will offerings for various organizations?

That's what I've found to be feeding my soul these first months of 2017. I'm feeling fortified. And that is the point of hosting or attending a Fortify potluck: it's about feeding the greater good. The concept came from my friend, Joy Summers, who's written for us over the years and is currently found at Eater Twin Cities, *Minnesota Monthly*, and various television shows like Twin Cities Live. As an answer to feeling more helpless than hopeful, she came up with the idea of people inviting friends and coworkers and family members over for a potluck dinner. While her house has the capacity for about 20 people, she hosted at least double that with a whole lot of kids running and screaming and having a good time. When it's potluck, nobody foots the bill of providing food for all, yet there is always more than enough food to go around. There was a pile of nonperishables to take to the food shelf and three jars of money to give to different nonprofits that could use some help right about now.

So, my part in this will be attending as many Fortify potlucks as I can, digging deep into the couch cushions and cupboards for money to donate and food to send to the food shelf, and hosting one myself. Last year for my birthday, I held a birthday dinner at a Dining Out for Life restaurant, since my big day usually falls on or near that big day. But this year, I'm hosting my big 4-0 at my place and it'll be potluck...with jars for contributing money for various nonprofits as well as a long table where we can all gather, find hope, and be fortified.

I'll still be Dining Out for Life as I do every year. I hope to see you out there as well. Find each other, gather around food, help those who need it, and realize that we all might need it, too, in some way, shape, or form.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■





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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

New Wine in Old Bottles

A beguiling giraffe face — calm, sloe-eyed — gazes languidly from the cover of the March *Smithsonian* above a blurb asking, "Will the beloved giant disappear before scientists even begin to understand it?" Also offered are "Decoding the Fate of the Vikings" and "Uncovering the Holocaust's Great Escape."

Greenland Vikings, it has been known for decades, settled substantial communities that flourished for 400 years as indicated by letters written between 1409 and 1424. Then, they simply vanished with no hint of haste or disaster.

Giraffes, reports author Alex Shoumatoff, are the least-studied of the large African animals, lacking the cachet of majestic elephants or social chimpanzees. Their numbers are falling drastically, from 140,000 in 1998 to 97,600 today. They are being slaughtered by man for reasons ranging from HIV/AIDS cures to soup bones, while habitat loss erodes their grazing land. Less a mystery here than a question of when time will run out for the gentle, enigmatic creatures.

Starting in 1941 in today's Lithuania, some 90,000 Jews were methodically shot to death and buried in mass graves in the town of Ponar's surrounding forest. In 1944, deciding that "there must not be any trace," a commander told prisoner Motke Zeidel the bodies would be exhumed and burned.

Zeidel, who lived to tell his story, and fellow prisoners were set to this dreadful task. They also started tunneling in February 1944 and escaped on April 15. An extraordinary feat, but without evidence, author Matthew Shaer notes that their 100-foot tunnel was a legend, easily denied.

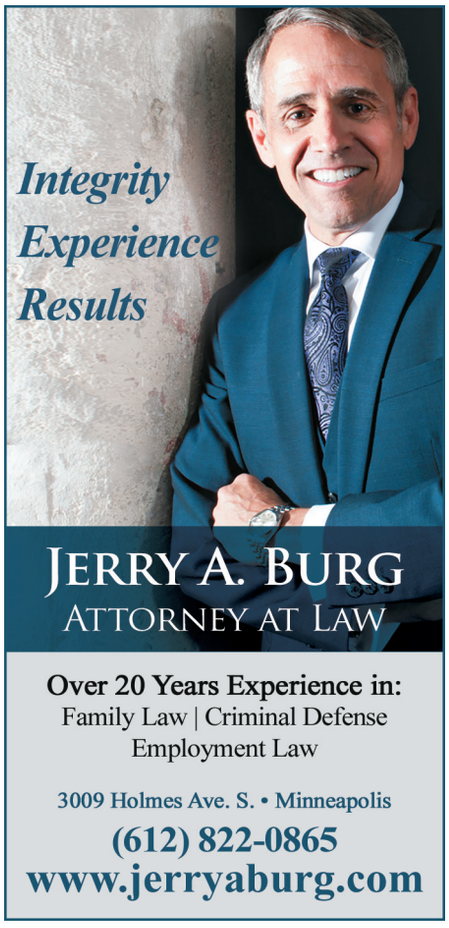
But Richard Freund, a practitioner of what he calls "non-invasive archaeology," approached the site in 2016 using ERT (electrical resistivity tomography) among other methods. Running data into laptops in the field, he located "a sliver of red against a backdrop of blue." The tunnel. A legend made fact.

And the Viking mystery? A triple whammy, reports author Tim Folger. Recent evidence indicates their profitable walrus tusk ivory trade dwindled, supplanted by better quality elephant ivory; dramatic climate change (in 1257 an Indonesian volcano caused a global temperature dip); and the Black Death. Greenland was spared, but half the population of Norway, "Greenland's lifeline to the civilized world," perished.

Globalization issues, climate change, habitat loss, man's savagery to man and beast — everyone is still vulnerable to these forces, and addressed or not, we survive at their whim. ■






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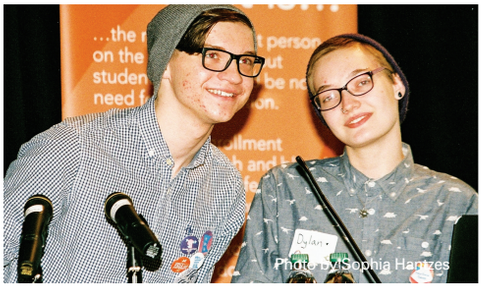
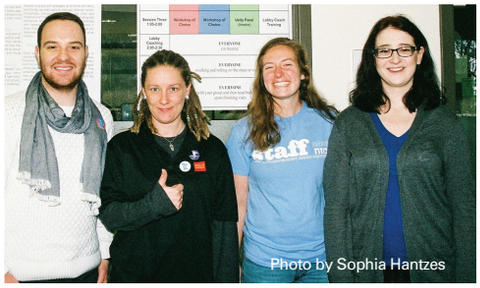
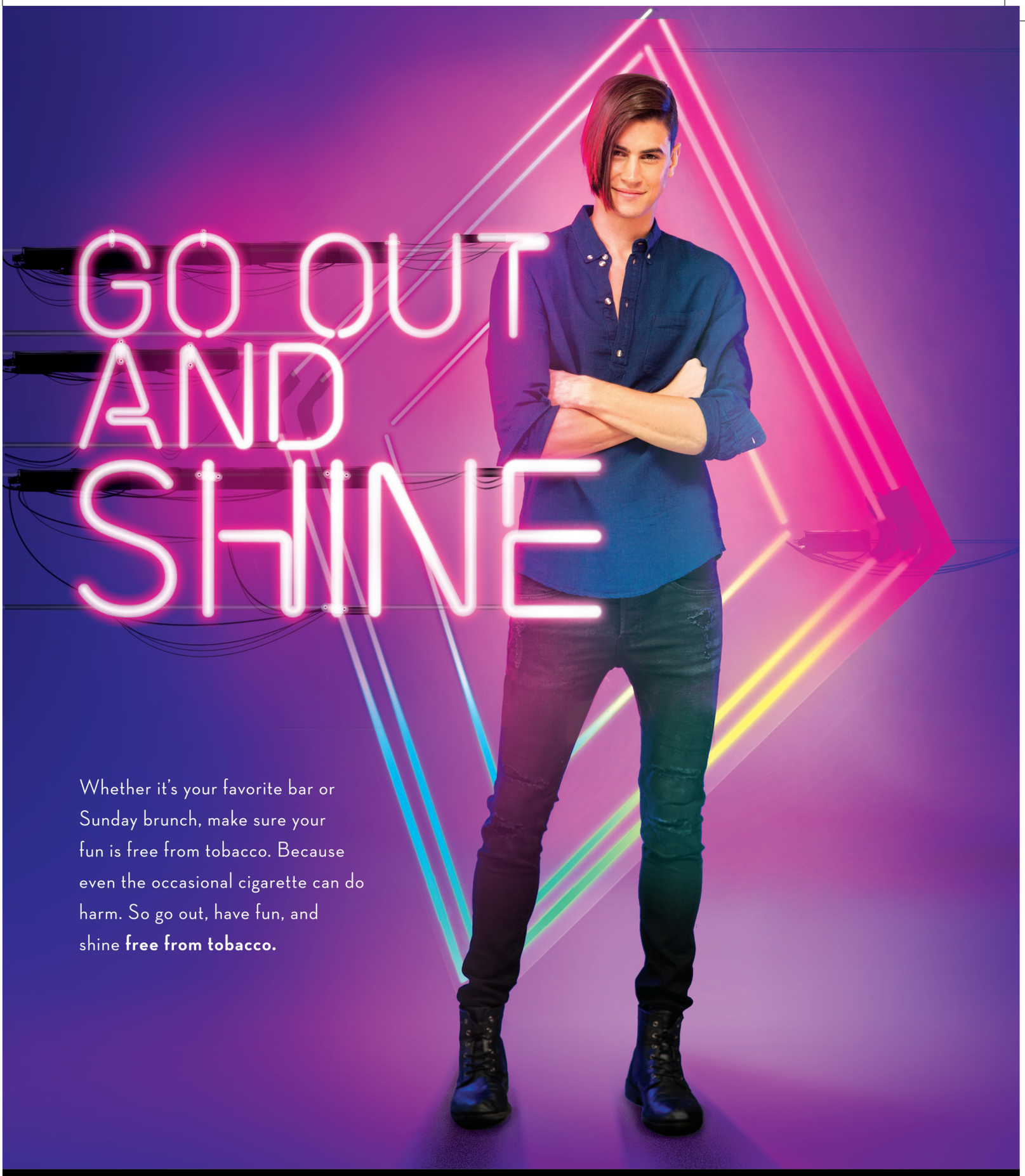

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Battlefield. Photo by Caroline Moreau

BATTLEFIELD

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www.guthrietheater.org

Peter Brook looms as one of the world-class figures of 20th century theater. His 1968 book, *The Empty Space*, is like a Bible for three generations of theater practitioners and scholars. In 1964 Brook directed the first English language production of *Marat/Sade* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. It stands as one of the preeminent stage productions of that decade.

Brook's deconstructionist-minimalist approach has an uncanny way of showing that less is more. It taps into the sacred. Paradoxically, when dealing with epic work, Brook has a way of sweeping us away in the same way a lavish costume and scenically designed drama might, but without the lavishness. His nine-hour 1985 milestone, *The Mahabharata,* based on the Sanskrit epic poem was a collaboration with Jean-Claude Carrière and it stands preeminently as well.

Now you can see a 70-minute excerpt of *The Mahabharata* at the Guthrie titled *Battlefield*, collaborated on with Carrière, as well as Marie-Helene Estienne. Four actors and a musician tell the story of a family at war within itself and at war in the larger world as well. A healing process is implemented through animal fables. You could also call it a journey to enlightenment. This is part of the Guthrie Theater's WORLDSTAGE series.

5 WEEKS

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No local theater company provides a global view as vast as Pangea World Theater. Their record is remarkable. Within this broad reach is a critical interest in history. Their latest production, *5 Weeks*, was written by Meena Natarajan. She shares, "This play deals with the experiences of ordinary people who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances. It took five weeks to create the partition of British India into the countries of India and Pakistan in August 1947 and this act has continued to reverberate for the next 70 years. The older generation hardly spoke about partition and, yet, we continue to experience its shadow in the violence that continues to occur as its legacy. There are so many questions this play explores: questions of citizenship and belonging, the fragmentation of community, the massive movement of refugees on both sides of the border based on religion, the violence inflicted on women and children, the courage of those who dealt with its impact and found themselves all over again. It's hard to imagine what they went through and, yet, these stories are important if we are not to have history repeating itself all over the world. I am thrilled to have a multilingual cast of actors from the community that come from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and original music by Pooja Goswami Pavan, A. Pavan, and Vijay Ramanathan."

VIETGONE

Through April 30
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It's a fact of life in the world. Wars and military engagements mean refugees for the countries involved and surrounding countries. This reality was brought home to the United States after the Vietnam War, which included surrounding countries, Laos and Cambodia. It was also the case with Somalia and obviously now, given the ramifications of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In *Vietgone*, playwright Qui Nguyen draws from comic book aesthetics, martial arts, and hip-hop, to tell the love story of his parents who met in an Arkansas refugee center. When Saigon fell in 1975 they fled Vietnam. Just the sort of content that Mixed Blood Theatre relishes. Founding artistic director Jack Reuler points out that Mixed Blood "has long aimed to be a voice and home for immigrants."

Director of the *Vietgone* regional premiere, Mark Valdez, notes, "At a time when the immigration debate continues to heat up and the world struggles to find solutions to the global refugee crisis, playwright Qui Nguyen puts that aside and instead gives us a love story — his parent's love story — and in doing so, creates a play that takes on a

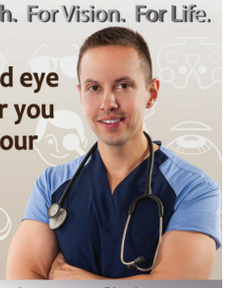


5 Weeks. Photo Bruce Silcox

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WICKED

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Stephen Schwarz not only made one of musical theater's biggest comebacks in 2003, but set the tone for theater in general by coming to bat for "the other." The Other in this musical is Elphaba, the green, so-called "Wicked Witch of the West" in *The Wizard of Oz*. This prequel is an alternative look into L. Frank Baum's original book and the 1939 Victor Fleming film classic. It portrays green-skinned Elphaba as a sympathetic gifted character and the blond, fair-skinned, and glamorous Glinda, the so-called "Good Witch," as deceptive and viciously ambitious.

As in *Godspell* and *Pippin,* his small-scale musical gems of the early 1970s, composer-lyricist Schwarz's more spectacular *Wicked* provides sensational tunes too. Just as *Godspell* gave us the memorable "Day by Day" and *Pippin* the crackling "Time to Start Living," *Wicked* offers "Defying Gravity," perhaps the most exhilarating tune in contemporary musical theater. Winnie Holzman wrote the book for the musical based on Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West.*

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

April 14–30
Red Eye Theater, 15 W 14th St.
Minneapolis
612-870-0309
www.redeyetheater.org

Red Eye Theater is a challenger of fixed ways of presenting theater. That said, Red Eye appeals to universal feelings. *While You Were Out*, conceived and directed by Andrew Lee and Hayley Finn, examines the emotional ramifications of a daughter's loss of her mother 30 years after her death. Two actresses play the daughter at different life phases. The audience is divided into two groups and follows the younger Bea (Maeve Moynihan) or the older Bea (Maggie Bearmon Pistner) separately until the two story lines converge. Electronic dialogue received through headsets and a trio of tennis-playing rabbis add to this unique experience.



Vietgone. Photo by Rich Ryan

AND THE BEAT GOES ON!

April 21–23
Cowles Center, 528 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
612-206-3636
www.thecowlescenter.org

Two distinguished dance companies combine their energy for a mutual presentation as part of the MERGE series at the Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts. Zorongo Flamenco will offer their traditional Spanish dance, along with the Flying Foot Forum's Scandinavian and American folk style. You'll see examples of their signature work, as well as a combined co-creation.

"Artistically we see into each other and can move together and direct our dancers," says Zorongo's artistic director Susana di Palma. "We have different ways of working. Joe is logical and organized, and his process is clear and clean. My process is through improvisation, in-the-moment changes to the last minute. But we have profound respect for each other."

Flying Foot artistic director Joe Chavala says, "While we are guided by the forms we know, we don't let the traditions rein us in and dictate what we can and can't do. I enjoy discovering the intersections and common ground and figuring out how best to blend what each of us do." ■



And the Beat Goes On. Photo by Bill Cameron

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TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR



Louisville skyline. Photo courtesy of Louisville CVB

Vu with a Room in Louisville

Louisville is one of the 10 hottest gay destinations in the USA, declares Orbitz, and George Stinson can claim some of the credit. Well-known for opening the Connection, a gay nightclub, and his Marketplace restaurant complex, in late 2016 he debuted Vu Guesthouse, a tobacco warehouse-turned-sexy boutique hotel. You'll spot it (even from Mars) by its blaze-orange and flamingo-pink exterior, guarded by two sculpted lions.

Its lobby sports what may be the largest chandelier in captivity, plus an ebony grand piano, mirrors, flowers, and enough bling to make Liberace look like a modest Quaker. Curvy hallways lead to its 19 rooms (15 more in the Annex), climaxing in a king suite sporting a bed that would improve Versailles, set against fuchsia walls under a high black ceiling.

Vu-land occupies an entire city block, complete with interior parking, a spa, patios, and a pair of restaurants: the casual Eatery 823 and white-tablecloth Table 817. There's also a theater/event space to seat 1,000 nearing completion, scheduled to stage a major drag pageant on its opening weekend July 27–29 (www.vuguesthouselouisville.com).

While you're in town, check out Pandora Productions, presenting theatrical pieces that speak to the GLBT crowd, as do Voices of Kentuckiana Chorus and Gay Men's Chorus. Then head to the clubs. Play is the newest and hottest dance party venue in the city, with drag shows nightly. A cluster of gay bars anchors a single corner in the Highlands, leading off with Chill Bar, laid-back and mellow. Nowhere Bar draws a younger, more casual crowd with dancing, pool tables, and an inviting patio, while Big Bar (big as your average closet) is a cozy, classy site hosting a clientele that's more mature and professional. Not far away, The Planet invites lesbians to kick back in its spacious lounge and enjoy live music.

You thought the Derby was big? Well, how about Pride? Louisville boasts not one, but two festivals: Kentuckiana in June on the waterfront of the Ohio River, and Louisville Pride Festival in September in the heart of the Highlands. For info, visit www.GoToLouisville.com/Compassion.

Big Arts, Big Eats

Main Street makes it easy. As Louisville's cultural corridor, visitors easily can hoof it from one arts venue to the next. Start at the renowned Actors Theatre of Louisville, where, every spring, critics from around the globe flock to the Humana Festival of New American Plays to catch six shows in a single weekend (visit www.actorstheatre.org and you can too). I enjoyed the ditzy *I Now Pronounce*, about a wedding reception going as awry as it can get; *Cry It Out*, the touching and comic commentary on new moms' choices; and *Recent Alien Abductions*, a dark story of a family's past and present violently colliding.

Follow Main Street to KMAC, the Kentucky Museum of Art & Craft (super gift shop, too). Nearby, the Muhammad Ali Center details this hometown hero's path from boxing ring to Vietnam War protester. Louisville Slugger offers factory tours along with baseball history and chances to try your skills at bat or on the mound. The 21c Museum Hotel's anniversary exhibit honors works from alienated people, from Cuba to Ukraine to South African prisons.

Then for a bigger helping of artworks, head to Old Louisville to the recently reopened Speed Art Museum, now doubled in size, allowing works in storage to gain gallery space, as in the collection of Southern Outsider art and photographs, along with masters old (Rembrandt) and new (Chuck Close's 2012 portrait of Obama).

Back on Main Street, take a break to tour and sip Kentucky's other art form, bourbon, at several new downtown distilleries. That'll set you up to head to Churchill Downs, where visitors can catch a race or ten during the three-and-a-half-month season — or mill around on Derby

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



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Day. All year, behind-the-scenes tours invite visitors to scope out the racetrack, Millionaire's Row in the grandstand, the 14 horse barns, and more. Then pop into the Kentucky Derby Museum to learn the makings of a thoroughbred; salute past winners; study the life of a jockey, trainer, hot walker, vet; and ogle a wall of famous Derby bonnets. The tour includes a surround-screen showing of *Derby Day*, climaxing in a song more dear to a local's heart than the national anthem: "My Old Kentucky Home" (BYOH: Bring Your Own Hankie).

All the foodie mags are hailing Louisville as the new dining Mecca of the South. No surprise to this visitor. Basically, it's good ol' Southern cooking with a splash of bourbon. Line up at Check's, a corner dive since 1944, serving fried oysters, fried chicken livers, fried bologna sandwiches, and other culinary icons. That's the drill at Wagner's too, cooking up breakfast grub aside Churchill Downs since 1922. Your biscuits and sausage gravy come with a side of people watching, as the horses' trainers stop in for eggs over-easy and a bottle of liniment.

At Corner Bar in the new Aloft Hotel, demand the pulled pork bourbon tacos. Proof, in the 21c, serves killer grits, dolled up with bleu and gouda, pickled peanuts, and jalapenos. Continue your grits education at Gralehaus, where they're laced with cheddar. Order a pimiento cheese-and-pickle sandwich on the side, or the biscuit with duck sausage gravy and maple syrup, duck cracklings, and a sunny egg.

Then address the grits, as in shrimp and grits, at Fat Lamb, the new hot spot, also justly famous for its lamb ragu. And fried oysters. And Brussels sprouts. Butchertown Grocery also majors in shrimp and grits, along with don't-miss dishes like chicken and waffles and a maverick Benedict of porchetta and kale astride a mega-biscuit. At Goss Avenue Bar in Germantown, it's burgoo, a traditional country beef stew with a shot of heat. And at Hi-Five, it's all about donuts. Famished? Visit www.gotolouisville.com and come away smiling. ■







Pimiento cheese and pickle sandwich. King suite, Vu guesthouse. Photos by Carla Waldemar; **Louisville Slugger factory-museum.** Photo by James Moses



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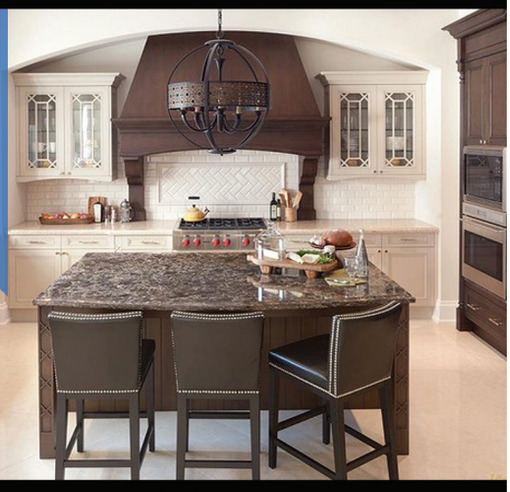
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A DAY in the Life

BY ANDY LIEN

PAUL BIGOT



Age:
Is this necessary? Okay, fine. 30ish.

Where did you grow up?
The Redneck Rivera: a small beach town in Florida called Fort Walton Beach.

Where do you live?
I'm an Uptown girl…Minneapolis.

Who do you live with?
This hook-up from four years ago that won't leave. Plus two dogs. And a Fox.

What is your occupation?
Hair and makeup designer at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, wig technician at the Guthrie Theater, and an independent hair and makeup designer at various theaters.

When did you come out?
At the age of 16.

How'd that go?
My mother was fairly accepting. I told my father that it took me 16 years to deal with it, so he had 16 years to get over it. Then I never wanted to hear another word after that. And… he did.

When do you wake up?
In a perfect world: noon. In reality: 8:00 a.m.

Phone alarm or alarm clock?
Phone alarm…five alarms with an hour of snoozing.

What's the first thing you do in the morning?
Take the dogs out, question why I live where it's cold, and tip-toe around my partner who really gets to sleep until noon.

Breakfast?
Sure…you buying?

Coffee?
I start every morning with a wonderful cup of coffee at Twin Cities Leather (shameless plug for my partner who sleeps until noon).

Cream or no?
Cream and honey.

How do you spend your commute:
Not sure, I just zone out…then wake up and I'm there.

If your job were like a yearbook, what would you be voted?
I really was voted "most likely to succeed" in high school. Today, "most likely to break out in song and dance."

What inspires you?
Talent. I admire people who pursue their craft…there is no small role in theater.

Do you eat your lunch while working or take a break?
While working. Who has time for a break? Especially after all my songs and dance numbers.

Is your work space tidy or a hot mess?
Please. "Hot mess" is an understatement. I literally have things scattered all over the metro and in my car.

What's been your favorite job?
I toured the country with numerous national tours of Broadway shows for almost eight years. Of that, *La Cage Aux Folles* was my favorite. Gay men, drag queens, and 1970s hair – what more could you want?

Who are your heroes?
Anyone who pursues their dream in the arts when they were told their whole life it was only a hobby.

Favorite weeknight meal: Go out, take out, or cook in?
Cook in. The only reason I let my partner sleep in is because he's a fabulous cook and I come home to great meals.

Most embarrassing moment:
When female actresses realize I get embarrassed by boobies while changing their wigs and costumes. It then becomes a teasing free-for-all.

On a usual weeknight, you are doing what?
Getting everyone ready for a show. Taking on and off sweaty wigs. Making sure everyone looks good going on stage.

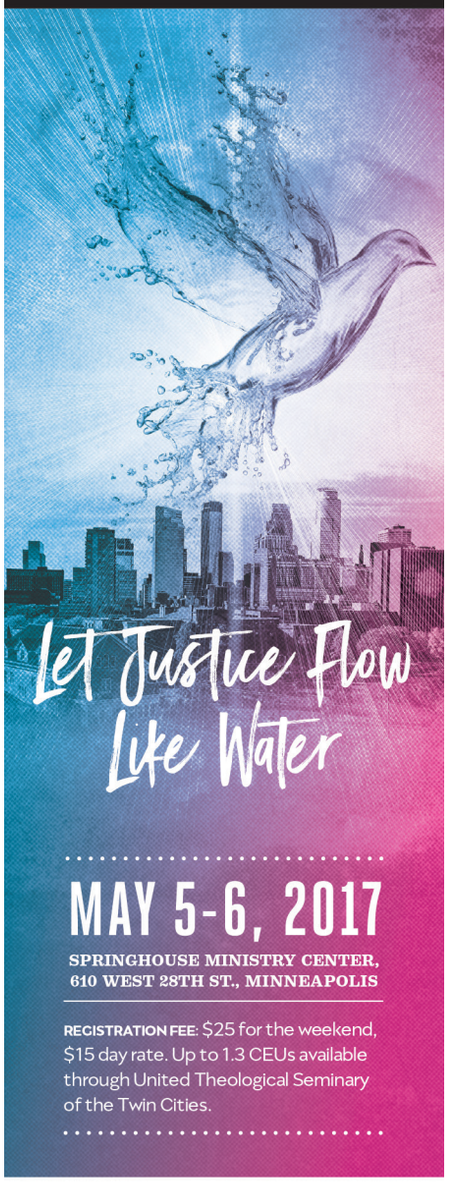
Bedtime:
Usually between 1:00 and 3:00 a.m., after winding down from work.

Favorite weekend activity:
Haha, what's a weekend? I work when everyone else ishaving fun…and am free while you're in a cubicle.

Words of wisdom to share:
I started out in this business as a dancer and was badly injured very young. I thought my career in this industry was over. I was later given the chance to go backstage and work. I found a new way to be involved in this industry that I love. I've achieved more success this way and feed my passions. My advice is not to become so focused on a single path that you miss opportunities to still achieve your goals, and then fail to realize your dreams.

See more photos online of some of his wigs from *Grease* and *Camelot* at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatres. *Grease* is playing now through October 28.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
NICOLE GARCIA



Nicole is a self-identified transgender Latina. She began her transition, MTF, while employed as a law enforcement officer for the state of Colorado. She is now a private counselor in Longmont, CO, and a MDiv Student at Luther Seminary.

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2017 DINING OUT FOR LIFE

DINING OUT FOR LIFE 2017

BY KASSIDY TARALA

Whether we're celebrating with friends and family, going out for date night, or just simply too lazy to make dinner at home, dining out is an important part in all of our lives. And how could it not be with the incredible array of restaurants throughout the Twin Cities? Now we can dine out for a cause. Dining Out for Life is an annual fundraising event that raises money for AIDS service organizations. Local restaurants can donate anywhere between 20 and 100 percent of their profits to The Aliveness Project in Minneapolis. And all you have to do to make an impact is go out for a meal on April 27 — maybe you'll see Kare11's Sven Sundgaard and Rena Sarigianopoulos out there as they get people excited to dine out and do good!

Lush Food Bar

100%

Known for its drinks, food, and dancing, Lush Food Bar will be donating 100 percent of their profits to AIDS organizations through Dining Out for Life. Their famous homemade guacamole is reason enough to check it out, not to mention the convenient bar food, which includes all of the staples: quesadillas, nachos, and wings. A small vegan menu is also available, along with a full menu ranging from a variety of burgers to a giant chocolate chip cookie. Located on Central Avenue in Minneapolis, Lush should definitely be on every foodie's list.

www.lushmpls.com

The Finnish Bistro

100%

A café of many hats, The Finnish Bistro is another great stop on the Tour de Dining Out for Life. Their menu is seemingly never-ending with a long list of wines, desserts, a gluten-free menu, all-day breakfast, and a dinner menu. Famous for their bistro cakes, this St. Paul café will make you feel like you're traveling the world through your stomach. From their Finlandia cake to their Italian Chocolate Almond, you'll want to taste them all. Stop in for a meal or drop by to pick up a treat to take home. Either way, you'll want to come on an empty stomach.

www.finnishbistro.com



Al Vento

Photo courtesy of Al Vento

Stewart's

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Brunch, lunch, dinner, and cocktails; Stewart's does it all. Located in St. Paul, Stewart's covers all the bases. Egg sandwiches, rice bowls, lobster macaroni and cheese, and, of course, adult ice cream sandwiches make the trip well worth it. If you're interested in trying something different, Stewart's will not disappoint. Their Pannekoeken dessert brings Dutch cuisine to the streets of Minnesota with a pecan streusel, blueberries, lemon zest, and crème fraîche ice cream. Is your mouth watering yet?

www.stewartsminnesota.com

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www.alventorestaurant.com

BANK Restaurant

35%

Located in The Westin Minneapolis, BANK Restaurant has a lengthy menu for every meal. With breakfast foods including fruit smoothies, homemade granola parfaits and blueberry



Blackbird

Photo by Hubert Bonnet

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30


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The Lowry

Photo courtesy of Blue Plate Restaurant Company

pancakes, you can start the day off right with food that is both healthy and delicious. For lunch or dinner, options like burgers, shrimp tacos, and vegetarian wellington will make your next date night as tasty as it is romantic.
www.bankrestaurantmpls.com

Blackbird
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www.blackbirdmpls.com

Muffin Top Cafe
35%

Ever wanted to be a member of The Breakfast Club? Well, now you can. And it's a lot tastier than the '80s flick. Muffin Top Cafe offers rewards to members of their Breakfast Club, which is free to join. When caramel almond croissants, a variety of coffee beverages, and their famous muffin tops are included in the perks, there's no reason not to be a Breakfast Club member. Loring Park's Muffin Top Cafe has a long list of flavor shots to keep any coffee drink interesting including English Toffee, peach, and apple pie.
www.muffintopcafe.com

The Hilltop
30%

If you need a reason to leave the city, I think I've found one. Located in Edina, The Hilltop offers breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert. Start off with pancakes, build-your-own burgers, or cranberry orange chicken. Finish your delicious meal with their famous pecan pie or one of their many cocktails. The Hilltop's happy hour includes discounts on beer, wine, cocktails, and even quesadillas.
www.hilltopedina.com

Butter Bakery Cafe
25%

This next stop on Nicollet Avenue (aka Eat Street) is known for delivering meals of all of your favorite foods without any of the bells and whistles of fancier restaurants. Famous for their biscuits, you'll definitely want to try Butter Bakery Cafe's biscuit sandwich. Piled high with eggs, veggies, and bacon, ham, or sausage, the biscuit sandwich is served on a warm buttermilk biscuit. If you're looking for something on the sweeter side, the eclair and blueberry scones will leave you craving more.
www.butterbakerycafe.com

The Lowry
25%

Dine out on the town — Uptown. The Lowry, located in Uptown, is famous for their burgers, oysters and eggs. All of which can arguably be paired with their whiskey. I recommend the chicken sandwich, which is layered with Wisconsin cheddar, basil mayo, and lettuce on a fresh ciabatta bun. Their famous baked pear crisp and banana cream pie will

Photo by Benjamin Swenson-Klatt



Butter Bakery Cafe

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



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Follow us on social media and at DOFLMN.org for more information and updates on how you can meet Mondo on April 27.

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Dine at these restaurants for a participating meal and a percentage of your bill will benefit The Aliveness Project.

THE ALIVENESS PROJECT

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner 🍸 = Includes alcohol | Donation % is listed next to each participating restaurant

DULUTH

PLATINUM

	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Duluth (DINE IN ONLY)	35%

SILVER

B			Amazing Grace Bakery & Cafe	22%
	L	D	New Scenic Café	20%

MANKATO

GOLD

	L	D	Pub 500	25%

MPLS - DOWNTOWN

PLATINUM

		D	BANK	35%
	L	D	eagleBOLTbar	100%
	L	D	🍸 HauteDish	35%
		D	J.D. Hoyt's	35%
		D	🍸 Market Bar-B-Que	35%
B	L	D	Muffin Top Café	35%
B	L	D	The Nicollet Diner	35%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Downtown Mpls (DINE IN ONLY)	35%
	L	D	The Saloon	100%
	L	D	Smack Shack	35%
		D	🍸 Zen Box Izakaya	35%

GOLD

	L	D	Borough	25%
B			🍸 FireLake Grill House & Cocktail Bar	25%
		D	Gay 90's	30%
B	L		🍸 Lowry, The	25%
	L	D	Lyon's Pub	25%
	L	D	Q fanatic BBQ - Minneapolis	25%

SILVER

		D	🍸 4Bells	20%
	L	D	Black Forest Inn	20%
B	L		🍸 Eggy's Diner	24%
B	L	D	Hell's Kitchen	20%
		D	🍸 Melting Pot, The	20%
		D	Monello	20%
		D	🍸 Red Cow - North Loop	20%
		D	🍸 Red Rabbit	20%
	L	D	Republic	20%
B	L	D	Tullibee at Hewing Hotel	20%

MPLS - NORTH

SILVER

	L	D	🍸 5-8 Grill & Bar, The	20%
	L	D	🍸 Crooners Lounge and Supper Club	20%
		D	🍸 Tooties On Lowry	20%

MPLS - NORTHEAST

PLATINUM

		D	Chin Dian	35%
B	L	D	🍸 Hazel's Northeast	35%
		D	LUSH	100%
B	L	D	Wilde Café & Spirits	35%

GOLD

B	L	D	🍸 Blue Door University	25%
	L	D	Eli's East Food & Cocktails	30%
B	L	D	Elsie's Restaurant, Bar & Bowling Center	25%
		D	Erte & The Peacock Lounge	25%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Nea	25%

SILVER

		D	Butcher Block Restaurant, The	20%
	L	D	Draft Horse, The	20%
	L	D	🍸 Ginger Hop Restaurant	20%
	L	D	Red Stag Supperclub	20%
	L	D	🍸 The Sample Room	20%
		D	Stanley's NE Bar Room	20%
	L	D	🍸 The Unofficial	20%

MPLS - SOUTH

PLATINUM

		D	al Vento	35%
		D	🍸 Birchwood Café	35%
B	L	D	🍸 Blackbird	35%
	L	D	🍸 Cuppa Java	35%
	L	D	🍸 George and the Dragon	35%
		D	🍸 Grand Café	38%
		D	Himalayan Restaurant	35%
		D	Hola Arepa	35%
		D	Icehouse	35%
	L	D	Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta	35%
B	L		🍸 Longfellow Grill	35%
	L	D	Lowbrow, The	35%
		D	Lyn65	35%
		D	Nightingale	35%
	L	D	Northbound Smokehouse & Brewpub	35%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Seward (DINE IN ONLY)	35%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Uptown (DINE IN ONLY)	35%
B			Twin Cities Leather & Latte	100%
B	L	D	Victor's 1959 Café	35%
B	L	D	🍸 Wise Acre Eatery	35%

GOLD

B	L	D	🍸 Blue Door Longfellow	25%
B	L		Butter Bakery Cafe	25%
		D	🍸 Curran's Restaurant	25%
	L	D	🍸 Galactic Pizza	25%
		D	Herkimer Pub, The	30%
B	L		May Day Café	25%
		D	moto-I	30%
	L	D	🍸 Pizzeria Lola	25%
		D	🍸 Rainbow Chinese Restaurant	25%
	L	D	🍸 Sassy Spoon	25%

SILVER

	L	D	🍸 5-8 Club, The	20%
B	L	D	Barbette	20%
B	L	D	Bryant Lake Bowl	20%
	L	D	Buster's on 28th	21%
		D	Café Ena	20%
B	L	D	🍸 Cafe Racer Kitchen	20%
		D	Coup d'etat	20%
		D	Eat Street Social	20%
B	L	D	Gigi's Café	20%
B	L	D	🍸 Hi-Lo Diner	20%
	L	D	Howe Daily Kitchen & Bar, The	20%
		D	Kings Wine Bar	20%
		D	Kyatchi	20%
		D	La Fresca	20%
	L	D	Manny's Tortas	20%
		D	🍸 Nighthawks	20%
	L	D	Pat's Tap	20%
		D	The Rabbit Hole	24%
		D	🍸 Red Cow - 50th	20%
		D	🍸 Rinata	20%
		D	Rincon 38	20%
		D	🍸 Roat Osha	20%
B	L		Rustica Bakery	20%
		D	🍸 Sparks	20%
B	L	D	Tiny Diner	20%
		D	🍸 Tum Rup Thai	20%

MPLS - SOUTHEAST

PLATINUM

		D	🍸 Brewer's Table	35%
		D	Pagoda	35%

GOLD

		D	🍸 Hilltop, The	30%
	L	D	🍸 The Signature Café	25%

SILVER

	L	D	🍸 Kafé 421	24%

ST. PAUL

PLATINUM

		D	🍸 Carmelo's Ristorante	35%
B	L		🍸 Cook St Paul	35%
		D	🍸 Finnish Bistro	100%
		D	Highland Café & Bakery	35%
		D	joan's in the Park	35%
	L	D	🍸 Khyber Pass Café	35%
		D	Ngon Bistro	35%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - St. Paul (DINE-IN ONLY)	35%
	L	D	Stewart's	50%

GOLD

B	L	D	🍸 Blue Door Pub	25%
	L	D	🍸 Foxy Falafel	25%
	L	D	Great Waters Brewing Company	30%
	L	D	Happy Gnome, The	25%
B	L		Swede Hollow Café	25%

SILVER

	L	D	🍸 5-8 Grill & Tap	20%
	L		Aesop's Table	20%
	L	D	Augustine's Bar & Bakery	20%
B	L		🍸 Black Dog Cafe	20%
		D	Black Sheep Pizza - St Paul	20%
		D	🍸 Heirloom Kitchen and Bar	20%
B			Mojo Monkey Donuts	20%
		D	🍸 Red Cow - St. Paul	20%
	L		🍸 W. A. Frost & Company	20%

SUBURBS- EAST

PLATINUM

	L	D	Brookside Bar & Grill	35%

GOLD

	L	D	Angelina's Kitchen	25%

SILVER

	L	D	🍸 5-8 Tavern and Grill	20%

SUBURBS -NORTH

PLATINUM

		D	Acqua Restaurant - White Bear Lake	35%
		D	🍸 Bambu Asian Cuisine	35%
	L	D	🍸 Maverick's Wood Grill	35%
	L	D	Meet Market - White Bear Lake	35%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Roseville (DINE-IN ONLY)	35%

GOLD

	L	D	Q fanatic BBQ - Champlin	25%

SILVER

	L	D	Boston's	20%
		D	Buona Sera Ristorante and Wine Bar	20%
B	L	D	🍸 Milton's V V B	20%
		D	Travail Kitchen and Amusements	20%

SUBURBS - SOUTH

PLATINUM

	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Richfield (DINE IN ONLY)	35%

SILVER

	L	D	Angelo's Italian Restaurant	20%
B	L		Rustica Cookies & Creamery	20%

SUBURBS - WEST

PLATINUM

B	L		🍸 L'Etoile Du Nord Café	100%
	L	D	🍸 Pizza Lucé - Hopkins (DINE IN ONLY)	35%
B	L	D	🍸 Yum! Kitchen & Bakery - MNTKA (DINE OUT ONLY)	35%
B	L	D	🍸 Yum! Kitchen & Bakery - SLP (DINE OUT ONLY)	35%

SILVER

		D	McCoy's Public House	20%
	L	D	🍸 Nonna Rosa's Ristorante Italiano	20%
	L	D	🍸 Park Tavern	20%
		D	🍸 Primo Plates & Pours	20%
		D	PUB 819	20%
B	L		Rustica Bakery & Café	20%



Hell's Kitchen

Photo courtesy of Hell's Kitchen

end your meal on a note just as delicious as it started.
www.thelowryuptown.com

Pub 500
25%

Pub 500 is a hotspot in Mankato for all food lovers. Appetizers include poutine, edamame, and pub pickles, which are perfect to enjoy with a cold beer. Sandwiches like the black bean burger, salmon BLT, and beer-battered walleye sandwich are all reasons why Pub 500 is on the map. Enjoy the sinful dessert platter of Budino, bread pudding, and chocolate mousse, which is perfect for sharing (or not).
www.pub500.com

5-8 Club
20%

If you're a fan of the Travel Channel, you're a fan of 5-8 Club. Home of the award-winning "Juicy Lucy," a cheese-filled burger featured on *Man vs. Food*, *Food Wars*, and *101 Tastiest Places to Chow Down*, 5-8 Club is the perfect mix of classic bar small plates and comfort food. With three locations in Maplewood, Minneapolis, and West St. Paul, 5-8 Club is one of the most beloved treasures of Minnesota. I definitely recommend trying the Juicy Lucy to find out what all of the hype is about; it surely won't disappoint.
www.5-8club.com

Hell's Kitchen
20%

"Damn good food" isn't their slogan for nothing. Hell's Kitchen, located in Minneapolis, serves sandwiches, burgers, and even breakfast all day — yes, really, ALL day! The ham and pear crisp sandwich is Hell's Kitchen's specialty. Featured in "50 Best Sandwiches in America," the ham and pear crisp sandwich has slow-roasted smoked pit ham, melted Swiss and Fontina cheeses, and poached pears. If you're a chocolate-lover, the bleeding heart brownie is loaded with raspberries and gooey chocolate. It might be called Hell's Kitchen, but that's definitely a match made in heaven.
www.hellskitcheninc.com

Red Rabbit
20%

If you're anything like me, you're always in the mood for pizza. Red Rabbit, located on Washington Avenue in Minneapolis, has an endless array of pizzas with unusual yet delicious ingredients. From pancetta and salami to Yukon gold shreds, and lemon, Red Rabbit redefines pizza. Oysters, pasta, and shareable plates are also on the menu, so whatever mood you're in, there's bound to be something for you.
www.redrabbitmn.com

Rustica Bakery & Cafe
20%

Ice cream, cookies, and freshly baked bread, Rustica Bakery & Cafe has it all. Recognized by *Bon Appetit*, *Food & Wine*, *The Today Show*, the James Beard Foundation, and *Time* magazine, Rustica Bakery & Cafe will more than satisfy your sweet tooth. Located in Minneapolis, Eden Prairie, and the Mall of America, you have a reason to make multiple stops for a pastry, scone, or cookie that will hit the spot.
www.rusticabakery.com

Sparks
20%

Whether you're looking for a classic burger or something new and not-so-simple to pronounce, Sparks is a restaurant in Minneapolis that you'll want to check out. From choripán to cauliflower za'atar, Sparks has a menu brimming with unique finds and delicious tastes. The olive oil cheesecake is a dessert you'll definitely want to save room for. With red wine jelly, roasted grapes, and vanilla, the flavors will explode in your mouth and leave you making plans to return soon.
www.sparksminneapolis.com

Republic
20%

Voted among the top 100 beer bars in *Draft Magazine* in 2013–2016, Minneapolis' Republic is a great spot to enjoy a meal or kick back with a cold one. Their duck and brown butter bison burgers are some of their most popular menu items, not to mention the chocolate ganache torte and key lime pie for my fellow sweets lovers. Famous for their beers and ciders, you won't want to pass up the drink menu. Flavors like raspberry, honey, and cherry will transform the way you see beer bars.
www.republicmn.com ■

Find the full list of restaurants participating in Dining Out for Life, the percentages they're donating, and which meals will apply (breakfast, lunch, dinner) at www.diningoutforlife.com/minneapolis/restaurants.



Red Rabbit

Photo by Cory J. Hinz

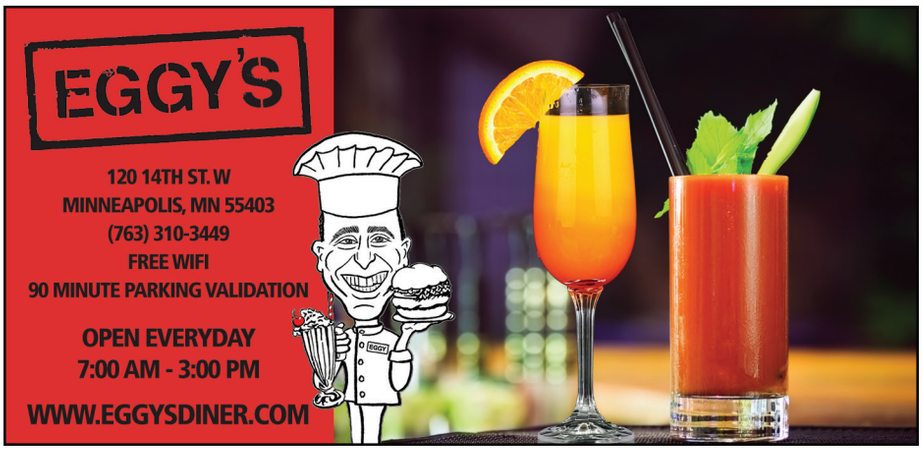
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2017 NEW RESTAURANTS

2017 New Restaurant Guide

BY ANDY LIEN

In the past year, we've had a whole lot of turnover in the Twin Cities dining scene. Here is a fairly comprehensive list of the restaurants that have opened (or reopened as a new venture) as well as a few we can look forward to opening soon.



Augustine's

Photo by Anthony Andersen

510 Lounge & Private Dining

Opening in the summer, the former La Belle Vie space will be reopened by Chef Don Saunders of The Kenwood. The Kenwood has smart design with great service and delicious food; I'm looking forward to seeing what transpires in this famous space.
510 Groveland Ave., Minneapolis
www.510mpls.com

Augustine's Bar & Bakery

A quiet opening last fall in an unassuming area of St. Paul, this bakery and restaurant on Selby by the same folks at The Happy Gnome is a welcome addition. The palm-festooned walls are welcoming, the drinks have been strong, and the Merguez sausage mac & cheese is so loaded as to be considered a casserole. Delish.
1668 Selby Ave., St. Paul
www.augustinesmn.com



Bottle Rocket

Photo courtesy of Blue Plate Restaurant Company

Bad Waitress Northeast

Just like its original iteration on Nicollet, this new addition to the hopping 'hood in Nordeast Minneapolis has nonexistent day service, which means you get to fill out your own ticket and be your own server. It's fun, it's cheeky, and this new space is downright gorgeous. Night turns to full-service and the menu expands from breakfast to include bar "snackies."
700 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.thebadwaitress.com

Baja Haus

Just opened a few weeks ago, Billy Tserenbat, the guy who brought Sushi Fix to Wayzata, is shaking up the lakeside town with some south-of-the-border food and drinks. For fun foods and tequila to tip, add this to your summer destination list.
830 Lake St. E, Wayzata
www.bajahaus.com

Bar Brigade

J.D. Fratzke of The Strip Club Meat & Fish fame teamed up with Matty O'Reilly of Republic fame last year to open Red River Kitchen, and now brought us Bar Brigade which opened in the Luci Ristorante space at Cleveland and Randolph in St. Paul in March. A 40-seat space that's been spruced up for French fare, the food is accompanied by a bar program put together by Tattersall's Dan Oskey.
2060 Randolph Ave., St. Paul
www.barbrigade.com

Bellecour

Another lovely new restaurant to open in Wayzata is Chef Gavin Kaysen's Bellecour. Fight for your reservations in these early months or go to the bakery like I did for a slice of some of pastry chef Diane Yang's crepe cake that always brings me joy. Or do both. And grab some baked goods to go. That's my plan for both immediate and delayed gratification.
739 Lake St. E, Wayzata
www.bellecourrestaurant.com

Bonicelli Kitchen

Chef Laura Bonicelli has turned a fresh meal delivery business into a brick-and-mortar restaurant with wine and beer. For the past nine years, people have been eating up her fine Italian meals. Now there's a restaurant in which she makes every meal an experience to remember.
1839 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.bonicellikitchen.com

Bottle Rocket

Opened on Valentine's Day, Bottle Rocket in St. Paul brings us back to a time when we "played more, relaxed often, and worried less." With a whole new branding and look, a menu of classics, and a kicked-up cocktail list, this space at St. Clair and Fairview that formerly housed Scusi is a new addition to the Blue Plate Restaurant Company family.
1806 St. Clair Ave. S, St. Paul
www.bottlerocketmn.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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Cafe Alma

Photo by Eliesa Johnson

Brake Bread Bakery

You may have seen or read about these guys in various media outlets as the bakery that delivers their subscription-based bread orders to its customers via bikes. So successful was this venture, Nate Houge and Micah Taylor of Brake Bread opened their own "brakery" in their beloved West End neighborhood of St. Paul where they also offer toast with plenty of toppings, cookies, coffee, and pastries. I recommend the cardamom twist. And I do not recommend taking the toast with Nutella to go because it's too delicious a mess to handle as the Nutella melts while driving home.
1174 7th St. W, St. Paul
www.brakebread.com

Bull's Horn Food & Drink

Bull's Horn Food & Drink is causing a fair bit of buzz. Chef Doug Flicker of Piccolo and Esker Grove, with his wife, Amy Greeley who also paired up with him on Sandcastle at Lake Nokomis, have purchased the Sunrise Inn in South Minneapolis to give us something new to celebrate as Piccolo has closed. We'll stay tuned for more details on this sure-to-be gem.
4563 S 34th Ave., Minneapolis

Restaurant and Cafe Alma

Restaurant Alma by Chef Alex Roberts closed for a stint to renovate and reopen as an Alma that includes a restaurant, café, and an intimate hotel. The design is swoon-worthy, the food is now available beyond what their former hours and bakery pop-ups had been, and we are thrilled to see such an evolution in this vibrant urban Minneapolis location.
528 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis
www.almampls.com

Dirty Bird

Nestled (get it? nest?) between his Upton 43 restaurant and Rose Street Patisserie in Linden Hills, Chef Erick Harcey has a grab-and-go chicken restaurant called The Dirty Bird. Take it from me, it's a snap to order some chicken and sides (don't forget the carrots…they're stupid-good), grab a dessert from Rose Street to go, and then sit at the bar at Upton 43 for a drink while the food's being prepared before taking your bundle of yum off to Lake Harriet for a picnic.
4312 Upton Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.dirtybirdmn.com

Dubliner Café

A place where I've spent many a night listening to Irish music, we can now grab some breakfast grub in the adjacent café space (which has been refurbished to the point of gleaming wood and vintage fixtures to beat all) or later-day eats in the bar, itself. I've had some great later-evening meals of sandwiches and burgers in the glow of the dart boards and neon ACE BAR sign at this old neighborhood steady on St. Paul's University Avenue.
2162 University Ave., St. Paul
www.thedublinerpub.com

Erik the Red

Erik Forsberg opened up a Downtown Minneapolis eatery with Carolina barbecue and Nordic foods…which might be a marriage with a name change of Minnesota Barbecue. In the former Hubert's space on Chicago Avenue, there are smorgasbords and smoked meats including slab bacon, turkey legs, short ribs, brisket, salmon, and lamb. I've got my eye on some mac & cheese and a lefse wrap.
601 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis
www.eriktheredbar.com

Esker Grove

Esker Grove is the Walker Art Center's new restaurant, led by chef Doug Flicker and inspired by seasonal ingredients. The space is stunning, the food is gorgeous, and it's a 2017 James Beard Foundation Semifinalist for Best New Restaurant.
723 Vineland Place, Minneapolis
www.eskergrove.com

Fitzgerald's

I wrote my ode to this redux of The Salt Cellar concept on Cathedral Hill last year; it's a place for all-day lounging, eating, and drinking. Chef Graham Messenger has pizzas, sandwiches, and entrées as well as a breakfast sandwich that'll make me settle in for a long while. Grab a drink, watch a game, and be as leisurely as F. Scott Fitzgerald was when he was known simply as "Scott."
173 Western Ave. N, St. Paul
www.fitzgeraldsstpaul.com

Glam Doll Donuts — NE Minneapolis

Glam Doll Donuts first opened on Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis in 2013, serving up donuts to dough-lovers morning, noon, and night. Now, at this new location on Central in Nordeast Minneapolis, we can not only get the diverse and delectable doughy treats we've come to know and love, but there are also a few savories available such as the "Belly Bomb," which is a mac & cheese donut. Take it from me, this is worth the buzz. It's got cheesy flavor and macaroni texture with a crunchy crust that'll bring you back again and again.
519 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.glamdolldonuts.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40



Fitzgerald's

Photo by Hubert Bonnet



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Long Lake, MN 55356
Lakesidewineandspirits.com

Herbie's on the Park

If you have seen the sculpture of Herb Brooks by the Ordway, overseeing all the action in Rice Park in St. Paul, you'll be able to find the new restaurant in the Minnesota Club, Herbie's on the Park. It's a social house with tavern fare and handcrafted cocktails perfect for the game or theater crowd.

317 Washington St., St. Paul
www.herbiesonthepark.com



Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Hi-Lo Diner

Hi-Lo Diner

Hi-Lo Diner, a retro diner on Lake Street in Minneapolis, is the place to find whimsical food envisioned anew as well as pulled from days of yore by Chef Heidi Marsh, with cocktails to beat the old grasshoppers of yesteryear. I'm a sucker for the Hi-Tops of donut discs with various toppings, not to mention they've got a killer burger.

4020 E Lake St., Minneapolis
www.hi-lo-diner.com

Jefe: Urban Hacienda

I have fond memories of walking along the riverfront in Minneapolis, getting hangrier and hangrier by the moment late last summer. Walking into Jefe for some Mexican street food and double-fisting some pineapple sodas as we waited for a table was the perfect salve for my hungry soul.

219 Main St. SE, Minneapolis
www.jefeminneapolis.com



Photo by Hubert Bonnet

JUN

JUN

JUN is exactly what the North Loop in Minneapolis needed: a Chinese restaurant where I'd rather eat-in than take-out. It's a rare combination to find these days, but Jack Wang and Jessie Wong have created a gorgeous restaurant with respectable bar program to match their top-notch food. The pork-filled bao bao steamed buns and the scratch-made noodles that grace many of the entrées are superb, my favorites being the beef chow fun and spicy Sichuan dumplings.

730 N Washington Ave.
Minneapolis
www.junnorthloop.com

Kata Organic Cafe & Fitness Boutique

I'm not someone who gravitates to a place that advertises a fitness boutique with food attached, but let me assure you that this lovely casual restaurant in Linden Hills puts no pressure on to work off what we take in. The menu is more than spa food, the cookies are cheap, and I love having a walk-up option in one of the hotter food neighborhoods that is high-quality without too fancy a package. While there's plenty to be enjoyed in the colder months at Kata, sidewalk dining has been divine, so I can't wait to get out there again this season.

4279 Sheridan Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.katacafefitness.com



Photo by John Leonard Mason

Kata

McKinney Roe

There's a whole lot going on in the newly named East Town neighborhood of Downtown Minneapolis; not just the big Vikings stadium, but also great new eateries like McKinney Roe at ground level of the Wells Fargo tower. There's a two-story dining room and expansive patio with food for a business meal, a special occasion, or as casual as a happy hour.

530 4th St., Minneapolis
www.mckinneyroe.com

Mercado by Earl Giles

Uptown's got a new taco spot with both coffee and cocktails to boot at 29th and Lyndale. Mercado by Earl Giles has taken over the space formerly occupied by Marche and is accessible by foot, bus, car, and bike…thanks to its location overlooking the Greenway.

2904 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.facebook.com/MercadobyEarlGiles

Mercury Dining Room and Rail

Mercury Dining Room and Rail is a gorgeous new offering by the Blue Plate Restaurant Company in the space previously occupied by Brasserie Zentral in the Soo Line Building in Downtown Minneapolis. A longer bar, a lovely space, a delicious pimento cheese toast appetizer…and an event space (with a killer roof) called Shindig are just a few of the features that make this hotspot a must-stop.

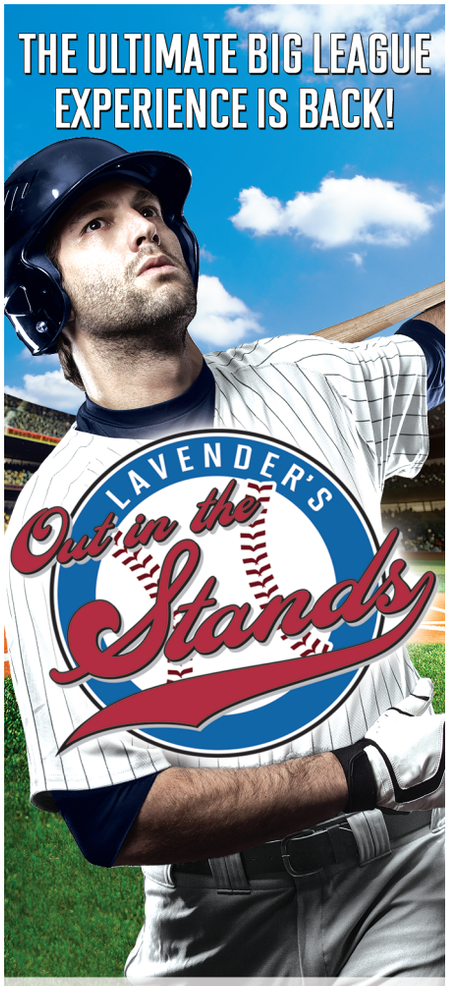
505 Marquette Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.mercurympls.com



Photo courtesy of Blue Plate Restaurant Company

Mercury Dining Room and Rail

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



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OUTINTHESTANDS









PinKU

Photo by Sarah Sampedro



Randle's Restaurant & Bar

Photo by Jason Merritt

Mercy

I just attended the opening of this new restaurant and I can say that it breathed life anew into the former Marin space on Hennepin Avenue. Mercy is a revamp in look, feel, taste, and experience, headed up by Chef Mike Rakun. It's another design by Shea that accomplishes more warmth and comfort in the upper level of the space as has been so loved in the Library Bar in the lower level… and the food and drink are just as comfy.

901 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
www.mercympls.com

Pajarito

Chefs Tyge Nelson (La Belle Vie, the Inn, Chino Latino) and Stephan Hesse (Masu, Libertine) have flipped the old Glockenspiel on West 7th in St. Paul into a destination for upscale Mexican food. The space is open and airy, the "elote style" Brussels sprouts make me smile, the tacos and meats are savory with just enough spice, and the queso fundido is the most simple-but-ridiculously-delicious reason I'll be heading there with frequency.

605 7th St., St. Paul
www.pajaritostp.com

PinKU

A fine-casual Japanese restaurant, PinKU is giving street food some flair. A smaller menu is offered from an open kitchen where what you see is what you get…and you get some good stuff. Fresh, time-tested, delicious.

20 University Ave., Minneapolis
www.pinkujapanese.com

Popol Vuh & Central

Popol Vuh and Central are the two parts of a duo-restaurant concept being headed up by Lyn 65's team. Chef Jose Alarcon Popol Vuh will be cooking Mayan cuisine and Central will be a counter-service taqueria.

712 15th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.popolvuhmpls.com

Punch Bowl Social

I don't know if it's the confit ribs or the pimento sandwiches that got me, but I'm in for this place, hook, line, and sinker. Even the hummus hits me just right. The West End place in St. Louis Park is abuzz with people playing games, bowling, eating, and getting their drink on, while also playing host to families and a superb non-alcoholic menu. Cardamom simple syrup is my kryptonite thanks to Punch Bowl Social.

1691 Park Place Blvd.
St. Louis Park
www.punchbowlsocial.com/location/minneapolis

Randle's Restaurant & Bar

Randle's Restaurant & Bar has taken over the former Ling & Louie's location on Nicollet Mall in Downtown Minneapolis, named after the legendary Minnesota Viking's defensive tackle, John Randle. Four floors of upscale sports bar and restaurant, you'll find what you want at Randle's.

921 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis
www.johnrandles.com

Red Rabbit

One of the hottest spots to open on Washington Avenue lately, Red Rabbit is a hit with pizza, pasta, and oysters. Brought to us by Luke Shimp of the Red Cow restaurants, it's more of what he does so well: comfortable sophistication.

201 N Washington Ave., Minneapolis
www.redrabbitmn.com

Red River Kitchen

As a hybrid of food trucks, a brick-and-mortar seasonally open location at City House in St. Paul, and a great view on the Mississippi, Red River Kitchen at City House opened last summer to great applause. With J.D. Fratzke and Matty O'Reilly, there's a winning team at the helm. Be sure to get over there as the weather turns warm for this season's offerings, or catch a truck out and about.

258 Mill St., St. Paul
www.redriverkitchen.com

Revival St. Paul

Oh, Revival. You crossed the river and we all rejoiced. Not only does having a Revival in St. Paul (maybe) release the pressure valve for getting into the Minneapolis location, but there's a more extensive menu (and takeout) in St. Paul as well as a bar with the full liquor offerings. I mean, I know I'm a St. Paul gal so I'm biased, but I think we won this round. In addition to the usual award-winning fried chicken, burgers, and sides, there are butter barbecue ribs here. Butterscotch pie. Pork belly like butter. Blessed be Chef Thomas Boemer and co-owner Nick Rancone.

525 Selby Ave., St. Paul
www.revivalfriedchicken.com

Rose Street Patisserie

John Kraus not only gave us Patisserie 46 in South Minneapolis, but he also opened up this Linden Hills stunner to rave reviews. While I go in there and ogle the architectural desserts and usually take some of them home (as well as macarons and the melt-in-your-mouth brownies), I'm also a fan of grabbing a quick lunch of a grilled cheese and side salad. Whereas Patisserie 46 is more hustle-and-bustle in close quarters, this location is full of space and air and light. My favorites.

2811 W 43rd St., Minneapolis
www.patisserie46.com/menu_item/rose-street

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44


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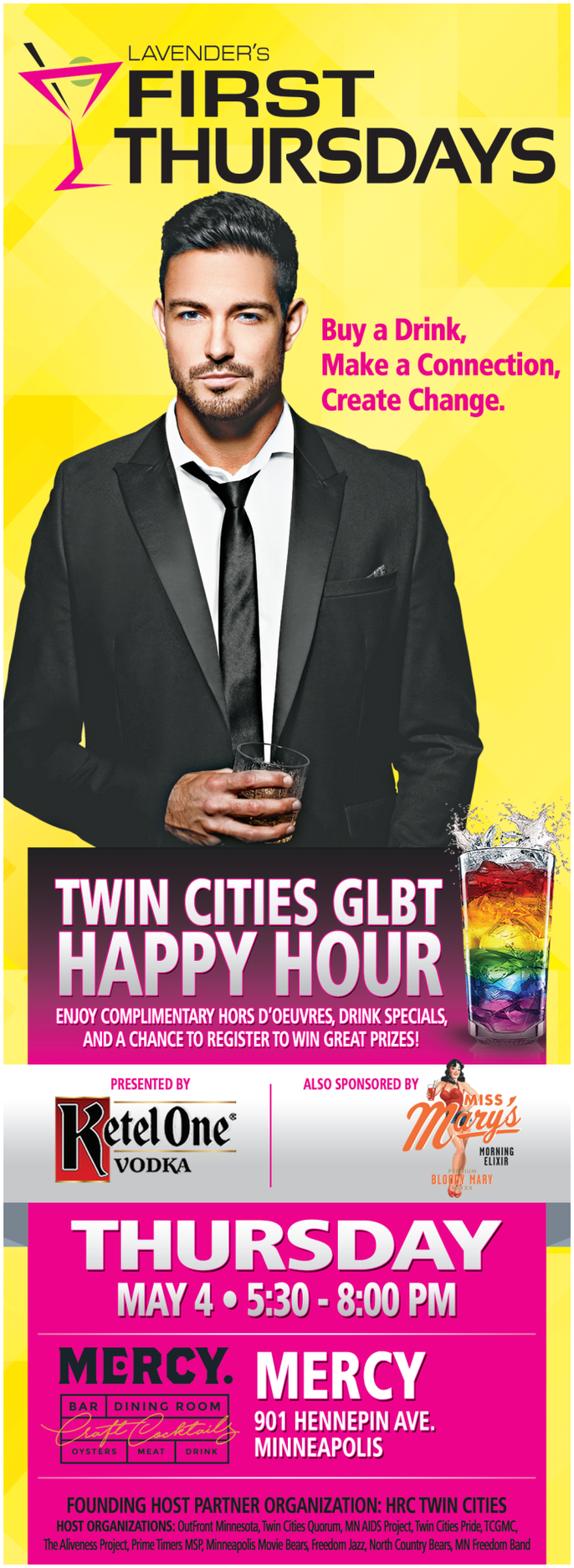

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Photo by Ian Bradley with Baker Brook Group

Spitz

Shake Shack Mall of America

In a gorgeous new food court at the Mall of America, this northern version of Shake Shack gives us burgers, fries, and all the fixings that have been loved for a long time in other locales around the country (and the world). I fell in love with a miso caramel malt from the get-go.

332 North Garden at the Mall of America, Bloomington
www.shakeshack.com/location/mall-of-america

Spitz

Spitz brings Mediterranean street food to East Hennepin in Minneapolis. Similar to gyro, al pastor, and shawarma meat, döner kebab is a type of meat that is cooked on a vertical rotisserie and it reigns supreme at Spitz. Have it done a variety of ways, check out some kick-ass art on the walls, listen to some tunes, and grab some craft beer.

Stewart's

Stewart's is a revamp of 128 Cafe near St. Thomas in St. Paul, with new menu items and a more prominent bar. Still serving up classic food for brunch, lunch, and dinner, the cocktails are also getting their due attention. I'm a fan of the steak tips, myself, but can find just about anything on the menu to please my palate.

128 Cleveland Ave., St. Paul
www.stewartsminnesota.com

Tenant

Tenant is a restaurant by chefs Cameron Cecchini and Grisha Hammes that's planned to open in the old Piccolo space in South Minneapolis with very few seats and an ever-changing menu.

4300 Bryant Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.tenantmpls.com

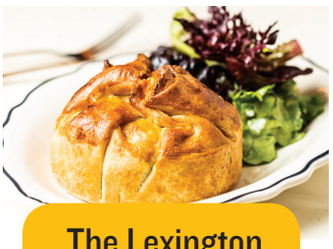


Photo by TJ Turner

The Lexington

The Lexington

Revived by Josh Thoma, Jack Riebel, and Kevin Fitzgerald, The Lexington's lights are back on, the kitchen is providing food for the well-dressed masses, and the staid and steady bar is serving up drinks for tippling. It's a dinner club for Grand Avenue in St. Paul, with a throwback menu of names that include Diane, Gorbachev, and Stroganoff with plenty of steaks and even some liver and onions if you so choose.

1096 Grand Ave., St. Paul
www.thelexmn.com

Town Talk Diner & Gastropub

Town Talk Diner has taken on a new flavor under new ownership, focusing on a gastropub/modern American eatery menu. Located on Lake Street in Minneapolis, the lights of the iconic sign beckon diners to come inside for dinner or Sunday brunch made with locally sourced ingredients for a farm-to-table experience.

2707 E Lake St., Minneapolis
www.towntalkmpls.com

Tullibee

Tullibee is a design-centric restaurant in the Hewing Hotel on Washington Avenue in Minneapolis. Still finding its footing in the food world here, the kitchen will be handed over from Grae Nonas to Bradley Day and will still feature Nordic food and sensibilities. As for me, I love to drink in the ambience. As I sip a pint glass of coffee wrapped in a Faribault Woolen Mill Co. coffee sleeve.

300 Washington Ave. N Minneapolis
www.hewinghotel.com



Tullibee

Photo courtesy of Hewing Hotel

Up-Down

Okay, this is less about food as it is about a whole lot of drinks and over 60 beers on tap with a fantastic number of 50 arcade games from my childhood. Take my word for it that it's a great first date locale. Sure, there's pizza with unique toppings, but there's also skee ball. Hold my drink.

3012 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.updownmpls.com

Xavi Restaurant

Located at 56th and Chicago in South Minneapolis, Xavi is a triumphant addition to the quiet neighborhood. When I can roll home happy and fed after just enjoying the pork belly appetizer, don't even get me started about how pleased I was by the red curry braised short rib…and the almond cake that I got to go. Chef Michael Agan and front-of-house expert James Elm have a beauty of a spot at Xavi.

5607 Chicago Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.xavirestaurant.com

Young Joni

Believe all the good things you've heard and read about Young Joni. Ann Kim and Conrad Leifur of Pizzeria Lola and Hello Pizza, with their skilled staff, have done everything right at this new beautiful restaurant. There's a speakeasy bar around back that is separate from the restaurant and a bit difficult to find, but it's worth the hunt with a bar menu that differs from that in the restaurant. And then, if you can figure out how to get in the glass doors of the restaurant (I seem plagued by the doors of this place), find yourself the dry and canny server who made us laugh so hard and take all of her advice as to what to order. I know that the La Parisienne pizza with prosciutto, Gruyere, ricotta, brown butter, caramelized onion, and arugula will be the friend I go back to visit time and again…followed up with a platter of the Church Basement Cookie and Bar Plate with the best Special K bars ever.

165 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.youngjoni.com ■



Photo by Matt Lien Photography

Xavi Restaurant


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LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

It's A New Day

With all the media attention being given to presidential speeches lately, I thought I'd give some attention to a recent speech by another president: Randy Ingram-Lile, president of the Atons of Minneapolis.

Ingram-Lile delivered his president's address at the annual Atons officers' installation banquet on Feb. 5. Normally, a president's address is not a feature of this annual banquet. However, these are not normal times.

I thought I'd begin by quoting some excerpts from Ingram-Lile's speech:

Ladies and gentlemen — or whatever pronoun you prefer — it's a new day.

Let's face it: 2016 sucked! Can I get an amen? Many of us have had individual troubles (heartbreak, disappointment) but it's a new day.

We need to stop fighting among ourselves. The enemy isn't sitting in this room. They don't care if you call yourself gay, or lesbian, or bi, or transgender, or any of the other terms that we argue about in our community. To them, we're all the same. And if you don't think that they're an enemy, then you need to wake up and realize, it's a new day.

We have to remember what we have fought for, and realize that it can be taken from us. And we can't allow that.

I want 2017 to be a great year for all of us. It's going to be a struggle. We have so many challenges facing us from the outside. We all need to find our strength within our community and our families. It's a new day.

Yes, as Ingram-Lile said, it's a new day. Many people are facing challenges they never thought they'd see. Suddenly things that were formerly beyond the pale seem to be seen as increasingly acceptable among certain groups. It's a backlash, and it's ugly.

This doesn't just apply to folks like us: sexual minorities, whether GLBT or leather/BDSM/fetish. This also applies to religious minorities, immigrants, people of color, the poor, and even the middle class. We all have reasons to pay attention to what's happening now, and to take the steps necessary to keep our families, our friends, and our communities strong.

How do we keep our sanity in times like these, when truth itself seems to be under assault?

One way to stay sane is to remain true to our values. So-called "values voters" are not the only voters who have values. Our communities have values too. Values like respect for self; respect for others; personal integrity; communication; negotiation; and the ever-popular "safe, sane, and consensual."

In times like these, we need these values. We need to remember them when the going gets tough. Then, we take them seriously. We live by them. We uphold them. We cherish them. We defend them.

Another way to maintain our sanity is to stand in unity and support with other people who are being oppressed or threatened. We as a community have been there. We know how bad it feels to be oppressed or threatened. It wasn't and isn't okay for us to be oppressed. And it isn't okay for other oppressed groups either. We all need to have each other's backs and each other's support. In times like these, standing together like this also provides a valuable reality check.

We need to remember that individually, we can't do everything. But we also need to remember that each of us can do something. We need to remember that we are not alone. We have a community to fall back on. And we have our personal values, and our community's values, to fall back on.

We maintain our sanity by understanding and appreciating the difference between facts and fictions/fallacies/fantasies. Yes, the leather/BDSM/fetish community appreciates the pleasures of fantasies. But we need to keep fantasy in its appropriate place. Fantasy can be appropriate in a bedroom, in a dungeon or playspace, or on a stage.

But fantasy becomes dangerous when it becomes the basis for public policy that will negatively affect the lives of millions of people. When that happens, we need to call out the danger and do what we can to stop it, the same way we would intervene to stop an unsafe scene in a dungeon.

We have overcome in the past. We can overcome in the future if we do what is necessary. But first we have to know what is necessary. And then we have to do it.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom." That sentence no longer seems like the platitude I once thought it was. Now that sentence seems like the new reality. At least for a while.

It's a new day. ■

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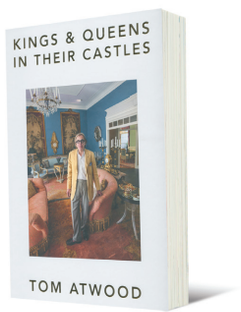
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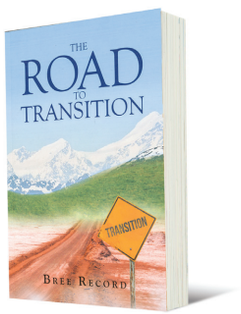
Hidden Figures
Margot Lee Shetterly
William Morrow
$15.99

Before electronic computers, human computers (usually mathematically gifted women with slide-rules, pencils, and paper) crunched the numbers and ran the equations that made America's airpower — then space power — possible. During World War II, jobs opened up for women at Langley Memorial Aeronautic Laboratory in Hampton Beach, Virginia, where despite the state's Jim Crow laws that kept the women segregated, they worked with passion and dedication. Shetterly splendidly highlights a number of these talented women against the historical background of World War II, the Cold War, the Civil Rights movement, and the Space Race. Dorothy Vaughn, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, and Christine Darden come alive to the reader and the panorama of American aeronautical success is illuminated by the genius of these (and many other) hidden figures.



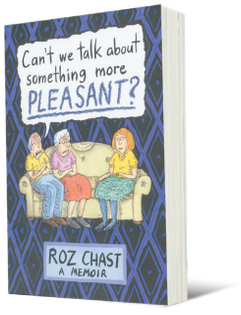
Kings and Queens in Their Castles
Tom Atwood
Damiani
$45

Following his magnificent *Kings in their Castles: Photographs of Queer Men at Home* (2005), Tom Atwood's *Kings and Queens* broadens in scope and gender in this second, lush volume. Selecting from photographs of over 350 subjects in 30 states, from celebrities to beekeepers, Atwood presents his subjects and their eclectic domains as theater, each habitat and inhabitant captured as a scene of the drama that is that individual's life, including Leslie Jordan crouched on his kitchen floor clutching a bag of tortilla chips, Bruce Vilanch and groceries, homeless activist Tim Coulter in his Scooby-Doo-themed van, Vermont beekeepers Mary Celley and Sue Williams at work. Each gorgeously rendered portrait seems not so much "posed" as having serendipitously caught the subject during an intimate yet everyday moment.



The Road to Transition
Bree Record
Page Publishing, Inc.
$12.95

Bree Record's journey to transition was fraught with pain and incomprehension, a story "40 days in the telling and 55 years in the living." The 40 days are the final ones leading up to her climactic gender confirmation surgery, the excerpts from her diary, the circuitous, tortuous path laid before the reader "to bring you the accurate portrait of what lay down The Road to Transition." The pain and anguish is clear, though Record's progression through three personas is less so. First, she was born female, and lived as Sarah till she was 13, when a four-day episode changed her to Steven, in/as whom she lived for 44 years, before setting down the long road to Bree. A harrowing revelation of gender and its needs.



Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant? A Memoir
Roz Chast
Bloomsbury
$28

Many of us find ourselves the caretaker of those we always assumed would take care of us. This can have varying outcomes, as humorously, ironically, disturbingly, and unflinchingly shown in noted *New Yorker* cartoonist Roz Chast's graphic memoir. As a caretaker, Chast falls under "only child raised by uberanxious, ultimately co-dependent, Jewish Brooklynites" subset. The saga starts when her parents were 78, ending after her father's death at 95 and her mother's at 97. Mother was domineering, Father was gentle, non-contentious; never able to adequately shield his daughter from the ongoing "Blasts from Chast" as her mother herself would term them. Orneriness, illness, dementia, denial, illness, fear, and rage are Chast's fodder, and she handles them with consummate skill. A must-read for anyone with parents. ■

QUORUM

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FAITH | BY DAN ADOLPHSON

Conference to Focus on Faithful LGBTQ+ Inclusion Amid the Current Political and Social Climate

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Minneapolis will host Nicole Garcia, self-identified transgender Latina, speaker, advocate, and counselor on Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6 at a conference titled "Let Justice Flow Like Water: Refreshing our Commitment to Faithful LGBTQ+ Inclusion." This is the third installment of FCC's conference series "VOICES: Addressing Issues That Affect the Church and Wider Community."

Nicole began her transition, male-to-female, while employed as a law enforcement officer for the state of Colorado. She successfully completed her transition in 2005, and resigned her position as a state parole officer in 2013 to finish her counseling education. In 2014, she completed her M.A. in Counseling from the University of Colorado-Denver, and opened her private counseling practice, Nicole Garcia Counseling in Longmont, Colorado. Nicole is also a Masters of Divinity student in the specialized M.Div. Distance Learning Program at Luther Seminary, and will graduate in May 2018.



Nicole Garcia, a transgender Christian from Denver, is studying to become a pastor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.
Religion New Service photo by Judy Griesedieck

Nicole has served on the boards of ReconcilingWorks; Lutherans for Full Participation, which advocates for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of GLBTQ Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their church, congregations, and community; Interfaith Working Group; and One Colorado. Nicole is one of nine featured trans* Christians in the January 18, 2017 article in *The Christian Century*: "How Do You Hold Your Trans Identity Together and Your Life of Faith?"

The conference will bring together faith leaders, congregants, and secular and faith-based partners to refresh their commitment to faithful GLBTQ+ inclusion inside our churches and ministry settings, especially amid the continuing changes in our government and culture. During the conference, local GLBTQ+ faith and community leaders will offer a variety of workshops, and organizations from the wider community will be there to provide resources. Participants will learn and grow together as witnesses of Jesus' radical gospel of inclusion, with a closing panel discussion where they will be equipped to take the message of love and welcome into the world.

Thanks to the generous underwriting of The Wholeness Fund of FCC Minneapolis, admission for the entire conference is only $25 (or $15 day rate). The event will run 3:30 to 8:15 p.m. on Friday, May 5; and 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on Saturday, May 6. CEUs will be offered through United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. ■

Information and registration can be found at www.fccminneapolis.org/voices.





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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2017 Lincoln Continental









The name is synonymous with American luxury.

The combination of Lincoln and Continental has been a part of the finer things in this country since 1939, when Edsel Ford signed off for a European-inspired version of the V-12-powered Lincoln-Zephyr that caught everyone's attention. The Continental was aspirational and iconic at the point where automobile design was turning another chapter.

The Continental name would become part of the lexicon of American luxury from the end of World War II on. In 1955, it became a division of Ford with one of the most desirable and expensive automobiles of its time. In 1960, it would revolutionize the American luxury car again by being trim and elegantly modern with the most significant car of the decade. The name continued through the 1970s as the most substantial automobile of the time even in the face of an oil crisis.

Since that time, the iconic name had lost its prominence. Last decade, it simply went away. Perhaps it was waiting for the right moment and time to reemerge into something to harken back to its past. That time has arrived. The Lincoln Continental has returned. The car for its name to be applied was the right one for its revival.

The 2017 Lincoln Continental was designed to be the brand's showcase of technology, performance, engineering, artistry, and luxury. It was to be uniquely American, as opposed to being globally aspirational. Did it fulfill its mission?

From the outside, one would agree that it did. The Continental is distinctive, with the new brand-specific front end design that has already been applied to the 2017 MKZ. In this original application, it looks spectacular. The lighting is also amazing, with a greater beam emitted from these small LED units inside of each headlamp unit. Each unit consists of five jeweled LED beams, crowned with an LED running/turn signal lamp.

Going rearward, the new door latches mounted on the belt line are a spectacular design element. The light-touch technology is not new, but the application is well executed. Exiting the car is done by buttons on the armrests, with an emergency latch in case it fails. The sleeker roofline is great, which leads to a rear end that had much debate among journalists. From afar, it is not as distinctive as one wants it to be. Yet, seeing it up close provides a three-dimensional design of the tail lamps and LED strips in a much better light. In all, the Continental is handsome with its fusion of heritage and modern highlights.

The interior is nothing short of spectacular. For our Reserve tester, we were treated to 30-way power seating up front. These fantastic seats provided a balance between comfort and support through on-door and on-screen adjustments. Even with push-button transmission switches, the entire Continental instrument panel is an excellent mix of heritage design with the latest technology, including a very dynamic TFT instrument cluster.

For rear seat passengers, one thing to look out for is the panoramic moonroof. If it is equipped as such, headroom for very tall people might be compromised. I'm actually OK in the rear seat, perhaps better without the moonroof. However, legroom is tremendous. I would even equal it to the legroom of one of the last Town Cars.

SYNC3 dominates the infotainment suite for the Continental, which is an excellent system combined with greater connective options. We used Apple CarPlay, which was a welcomed addition to the SYNC3 suite, but the navigation is superb, as is the use of other audio and information services the system uses. We were extremely pleased with the Revel Ultima speaker system in the Continental with 19 extremely well-balanced speakers positioned throughout the cabin.

The tester we drove had what will be the most desirable powertrain setup for the Continental. It is a 3.0-liter twin-turbocharged V6, connected to a six-speed automatic transmission with all-wheel drive. The engine alone puts out 400 horsepower. Add Advanced Dynamic Torque Vectoring, and you get the ultimate in power transfer and balance for its class. The result is a quick, smooth, and fantastic driveline. For such a powerful driveline, there is a bit of a penalty in fuel economy. We averaged 16.9 MPG in this example.

Another option to consider for the Continental is the Lincoln Drive Control. What it does is enable the driver to change the way the Continental drives through settings involving suspension feel, steering feel, and throttle/transmission response. This sounds familiar with a lot of products we worked with; however, to feel it in action with the Continental is indeed a huge change in the brand's image. How so? Imagine driving a Lincoln devoid of roll and lean through the turns, while maintaining a level, smooth ride throughout. This is absolutely remarkable and a fresh change for this kind of automobile.

The further result is an excellent balance between ride quality and handling. While in Sport, you do get nominal roll and a stiffer ride. Yet, that stiffer ride does not penalize the overall smoothness of the Continental. In softer ride selections — Normal and Comfort — cornering may loosen up, but is still under control with nominal roll and lean.

Lincoln Drive Control also manages the feel of the steering. In Sport, you get the tightest feel and heaviest control. This is great for enthusiasts; however, there is no shame in having the steering feel loosen up in Normal and Comfort. There is a drawback when it comes to making tight maneuvers, since the turning radius is a bit on the larger side on the Continental. We were hoping for a quicker steering set to make tight U-turns better. However, brakes are superb, providing great stops in normal and panic situations.

The Continental was also equipped with the latest in safety technology. Our tester featured adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning, blind spot monitoring, lane keep assist, a 360-degree and rearview camera with cross-traffic alert, parking sensors, and a parking assist feature.

For a base price of $44,560, Lincoln can get you going on creating a Continental to fit your needs and desires. Our Reserve tester came with almost every package and option on the list and a complete sticker price of $73,620.

For that money, you get a showcase of the latest and greatest Lincoln has ever produced. It is a price tag befitting of a Continental at a time of subdivision and heavy competition in the luxury car field. One may want the Continental to go after the standard bearer of premium automobiles, mainly from Germany. Yet, the Lincoln is distinctly different to hold its own, while attracting a new wave of big luxury cars from Cadillac, Genesis, Volvo, and Kia. Its reach also includes other offerings from Acura, Infiniti, and Lexus.

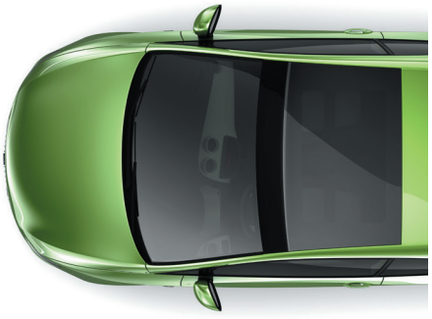
You have to take the 2017 Lincoln Continental on its merits. In that case, it is a brilliant automobile worth considering. It is the redefinition of American luxury worthy of its heritage of 78 years. The Continental also fits excellently in today's luxury car marketplace. More so, it is the most important car designed, engineered, and produced in this country for 2017.

The bar has been raised for American luxury. It has been accomplished by another Lincoln Continental. ■

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ADVERTISER INDEX

Adult
DB Graphics 50
Megaphone 45

Agencies
Imagehaus 49

Apparel & Accessories
Top 2 Bottom 49
QQ - Fashion Revolution 49
Twin Cities Leather & Latte 55

Arts & Entertainment
Capri Theater 23
Children's Theatre Company 23
Electric Fetus 37
Hennepin Theatre Trust 21
Lavender's Nights at the Theatre 37
The Minnesota Opera 23
Ordway Center for the Performing Arts 12
Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus 13
Well Strung 29

Automotive
Borton Volvo 47
Fiat Minneapolis 51
Green Garage 53
LaMettry's Collision 51
Mister Car Wash 47
Rosedale Chevrolet 57
White Bear Mitsubishi 9

Bars & Nightlife
19 Bar 45
The Commodore Bar & Restaurant 3
Gay 90's 45

Beauty & Relaxation
Omni Plastic Surgery 7

Beverages
Haskell's 12
Lowry Hill Liquors, Lakeside Wine & Spirits 39
Miss Mary's Mix 29
South Lyndale Liquors 19

Casinos
St. Croix Casino 5

Coffee & Tea
Fireroast Cafe 37

Events
Lavender First Thursdays 43
Lavender's Out in the Stands 41
Lavender's Score Thursdays 43

Event Venues
Prestwick Golf Club 25

Financial
Angie Sherer, LeaderOne Financial 49
H&R Block 19
Roya Moltaji, Charterpoint Wealth Strategies 25

Gifts
Outloud Promotions 49

Grocery Stores
Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli 37

Health & Wellness
Veil Orthodontics 23
Irene Green, MSEd 49
Mill District Dental 15
North Memorial Health Care 15, 60
PrEP 11
This Free Life 17
University of Minnesota, Infectious Diseases 59
Uptown Dermatology & SkinSpa 8

Home Furnishings & Accessories
FrameStyles 25
Habitation 27

Home Services
House Lift Remodeler 10
Select Surfaces 24
Shelter 7
Standard Heating & Air Conditioning 25
Zen Windows 8

Insurance
Baldwin, Davina 49
Bartell, Dawn 19
Pam Peterson, American Family Insurance 49

Jewelry
Arthur's Jewelers 7
Jewelry by Johan 13
Max's 27
Scheherazade Jewelers 15
Stephen Vincent Design 25
Wedding Day Diamonds 19

Legal
Cloutier Law Offices 10
Jerry Burg, Attorney at Law 13

Media & Communications
Radio K 770 47

Optical
Origins Eye Clinic 19

Organizations
The Aliveness Project 32, 33
Twin Cities Quorum 48

Pet Products & Services
Downtown Dogs 4
Second Chance Animal Rescue 8
U of M College of Veterinary Medicine 41

Real Estate & Rentals
Brad Bernowski, Coldwell Banker Burnet 49
Ruzick, Amy & Johnson, Kay 49

Religious
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 27

Restaurants
Al Vento 35
Burger Moe's 39
Cecil's Deli 29
Eggy's Diner 35
Element Wood Fire Pizza 35
Icehouse 37
Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta 29
Jax Cafe 41
Blue Plate 35
McCoy's Public House 31
Mercy 2
Nicollet Diner 41
Red Cow 39
Sawatdee Thai 35
W.A. Frost and Company 3
Wilde Cafe & Spirits 49

Sports & Recreation
Osseo Power Sports 53

Travel & Accommodations
AC Hotel 24

Wedding Resources
Burbank Livingston Griggs Mansion 3
The Commodore Bar & Restaurant 3
Dellwood Country Club 23
Hotel 340 3
Saint Paul Athletic Club 3
Stout's Island Lodge 3
The University Club of Saint Paul 3
The Woman's Club of Minneapolis 29

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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Step It Up

When I married last year, I became stepmom to two boys, one in middle school and one in high school.

At age 50, it's been a tricky transition venturing from the shallow delights of a me-me-me lifestyle into the murky and mysterious depths of them-them-them.

The currents are made more challenging with the addition of an ex-husband, his wife, step- and half-siblings, and intensely detailed calendars that chart the comings and goings of all the constellations in this complicated galaxy. For my own sanity, I've settled into the crazy orbit as a distant and benevolent object whose role is ill defined. I'm the family's Pluto: not quite a planet but significant enough to be given a name. In my case, it's Stepish Mom.

I'm a parent-like figure, but don't meet all the necessary criteria of being an official parent.

I do all the things that are required of a stepparent, but with a complete lack of confidence. I keep my mouth shut when discipline needs to be doled out because I don't want to be the bad guy. I buy their love with sugary drinks and video games when their mom isn't looking. And I tag along to band concerts and soccer games like a slightly dotty maiden aunt who claps too enthusiastically following a performance, even though it's not my approval the kids are seeking.

When we first moved in together, I was determined to master my new parenting duties. So I looked on the internet for help.

Like the time I used the web to self-diagnose the weird growth on my toe, this was a mistake. Here are some sample headlines from a search on the subject:

"Being a stepparent will put your self-esteem to the ultimate test"

"How to avoid letting your partner's kids destroy your relationship"

"Choosing to be a stepparent: Don't do it!"

And then there are a bunch of links to porn sites.

Surprisingly, given the high divorce rate in this country, there is very little constructive advice available for "stepping," which is what I call it because that makes it sound active, fun, and wholesome, like something you do at a hoedown.

I treat family life as if it is a merry melodrama where I have no real responsibility and serve as only a bit player whose function is comic relief. This has served me well, up to a point.

That point has a name. The point's name is Christina, my spouse, who understands that parenting isn't instinctive and pokes me in the right direction when I'm doing decidedly unparental things, like suggesting we allow the 12-year-old to spend the night alone at a water park hotel while we go to a spa. The kids also have been wonderfully forgiving of my foibles, quietly nudging me to act like an adult when they need one.

What is rarely noted about stepparenting are the rewards, which come in unexpected bursts and light up your atmosphere as bright as a comet.

Last week, for example, I got an urgent text from the middle-schooler asking me to bring over snacks for his entire class. I was at work and couldn't leave the office, so I contacted my spouse, assuming he had tried and failed to reach her or his dad before making the hail-Mary text to me.

But I learned that, no, I was his first contact. Of the four parents in his life, he chose me, the dwarf planet, to come through with the snacks. "Why me?" I asked him later that day.

"Because I knew you'd bring good snacks, and not carrots and apples," he said. ■



SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Gavin Grimm

At this year's Grammy Awards, transgender icon Laverne Cox interrupted her music star introduction to highlight the case of Gavin Grimm, a 17-year-old Virginia high school student who's become the poster child for transgender rights in the United States. Cox urged, "Everyone, please Google 'Gavin Grimm.' He's going to the Supreme Court in March. 'Hashtag stand with Gavin.'"

Not long after Cox's plea, the Supreme Court changed its mind and sent Gavin's case back down to the trial court judge who had originally ruled against Gavin. As I discuss below, I doubt this will make any difference for Gavin, who is set to graduate high school later this spring.

Still, sooner or later, the Supreme Court will weigh in on transgender people and their rights, particularly as it relates to public restroom and locker room usage. Given that less than half of all transgender people transition surgically (meaning that the majority of trans folks still have the plumbing they were born with), how the Supreme Court ultimately decides the issue will affect the lives of many humans.

The fact is that people who have no idea what it means to be transgender have all the decision-making power here. There are only two transgender judges in the country (yours truly once tried to be number three, but that's another story for another day) and as a result, we trans people are at the mercy of humans who really don't understand what it means to be "other." Sometimes the ignorance is glaring.

For example, take the judge in Gavin's case, the one who now has the case back in his lap. On the first go-around, the judge accepted the school district's argument that gender is "immutable." In doing so, the judge implicitly accepted the "creationist" approach to human etiology (which fits in nicely with the people who are raising huge amounts to fund bathroom bills across the country).

Another problem with the trial judge: he was very skeptical about the risk of a urinary tract infection from "holding" for too long. (Gavin testified that he experienced UTIs from not using the restroom because he considered it demeaning to use the alternative bathroom in the nurse's office that school officials offered.) I'm not surprised that a male (with a much longer urinary tract) would have problems understanding that a biological female (who have much shorter urinary tracts) could develop infections from "not going."

The trial judge also called gender dysphoria a "mental disorder" (psychologists considering the incongruity between brain and body a "condition" and not a "disorder"). This sure makes it sound like the judge believes trans people are just plain "crazy."

Finally, the judge implicitly (if not outright) questioned what it meant to be transgender, saying that Gavin "wants" to be a boy. I'm sorry, but this isn't about "wanting" to be anything; rather, it's about being a human who is.

The trial judge was thought so biased that on appeal, Gavin's ACLU attorneys asked that the case be assigned to a different judge. The appeals court denied that request and so now the case goes back to the judge with the aforementioned biases.

Before there was even a lawsuit, there was a public hearing in front of the Gloucester County School Board where more than 25 people spoke; most argued against Gavin's restroom request. As reported by the Gloucester Daily Press, many of the comments concerned perceived safety issues: fears that Gavin might be hurt; that he might hurt others; and that allowing Gavin freedom in this instance would open the door to trans female teenagers using female restrooms and locker rooms where "things could happen."

Gavin also spoke to the school board. In a short video of Gavin's remarks (which you can view on YouTube), you see a stocky male teenager walk to a podium and put his hands in his pockets. In what turned out to be an eloquent impromptu speech, Gavin spoke of how no student ever complained about him using the high school's male restrooms. Instead, the complainers were "adults making comments not knowing what they are talking about." Gavin argued, "I did not ask to be this way; I didn't choose to be transgender." He analogized to a child having cancer, through no fault of their own, and how any parent would do whatever they could to protect that child. Being transgender is something that needs protecting as well, Gavin rationalized.

In closing, Gavin reminded the school board, "I'm just a human. I'm just a boy."

Well said, Gavin. You compel respect as you teach us about grit and determination and what it means to stand up for one's self.

#StandwithGavin. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change *(2013). She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.humaninspirationworks.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*



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